OPINION

JUNE 1971

Single Copy 50 Ps.

OPINION

Vol. XII 29th JUNE 1971 No. 9

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(4) on the address-slip means that subscription was due in April. If not paid before 13th July, the issue of that date will be sent by V.P.P.

ANOTHER CHANCE IN WEST BENGAL

FORTUNATE indeed is the Government of India to be given one more opportunity to put things right in West Bengal. The dissolution of the Assembly and the resignation of the Mukerjee Ministry leave the field open to it. Upto now it has taken no advantage of the opportunities it had. Accordingly, conditions in Bengal improved but little under its care. Will it do better now ? That depends on two decisions. It must determine that there will be no elections in Bengal for the next three years, the state continuing under its direct control for that period. There is ample justification for this. If the elected governments of a state again and again prove incapable of governing, do the people of the state cease to be Indians ? And if they still remain Indians, is it not the paramount duty of the Central Government, the Government of All-India, to govern and thus protect their lives and citizenship rights ?

Obviously it is, and the duty must be fulfilled determinedly and fully. Which brings us to the second decision, the choice of the man who is to be responsible for fulfilling this duty, who is to manage on behalf of the Government of India, to be the Governor of West Bengal. In personal rule, which President's rule is in effect, everything depends upon the person in charge. Choose the right Governor, result success. Choose the wrong Governor, result failure as great as under an incapable, divided, corrupt Ministry.

Over a year ago, *Opinion* (24-3-1970) said, "If Governor's rule in Bengal is to serve its real purpose, it must be strong, impartial, independent, disinterested. Ordinary people must be made to feel both safe and confident. 'Good man he was, stern and just. In his time, none dared hurt another.' Is Mr. Dhavan, the present Governor, likely to fill this bill ? Hardly. Himself very close to the Communists, a notable fellow-traveller of long standing, he can scarcely be expected to be impartial. . . . Not from such a man can be expected the action needed, the firmness that while it may displease politicians of all sides and annoy vested interests of all kinds from the trade union leader to the industrial magnate, will really serve the people. On the crucial issues, it would be unfair to expect him to be independent or firm . . . (he) does not even seem to realise that it is not part of his business to play politics. If it were there would be no point at all in having Governor's rule.

"Thinking people in Bengal, men of character and good sense, are sick to death of politicians of every kind. What they want is a period of rest from them, during which the government will be carried on in no one's interest except that of the people. For this, clearly, neither Mr. Dhavan nor any politician, complete or semi, will do. This is the assignment for a first-rate administrator, capable of disregarding both the smiles and the frowns of the powerful of every kind, and just going on doing what he

knows to be right and just. Round such a man, after seeing him at work for a short while, the common folk would rally. Is Mrs. Gandhi prepared to make the change, which apart from other results, would be very beneficial to her own prestige. . . ?"

Mrs. Gandhi was not prepared to make the change, though she would have had little difficulty in picking out such a man. (This writer could name at least three to none of whom, so far as he can judge from her own past conduct, she should have any objection.) She preferred to keep Dhavan and please the Soviet Union, very probably. The result? A tremendous deterioration in the life of the state and condition of the administration. Says a distinguished Bengali in a recent letter "if the revolutionaries, of several varieties, time their 'action' programme, the administration will collapse in most places, as it already has in some areas. Already 500 fire-arms must have been taken away from individual licensees and now nobody even dares to report the matter except by giving a false story. A mobile multi-faceted guerilla army is already under formation. An alert and decisive policy could do something about it with military aid. But the police is no longer alert or decisive." Instead of saving East Bengal as it ought to do, is the Government of India intent on losing West Bengal? If it is, it will be taking exactly the right path by keeping Dhavan or appointing another of his kind.

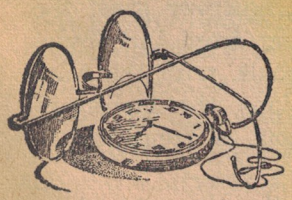
An argument sometimes put forward in influential circles is "True, our No. 1 is not much use. We couldn't help having him. But see how we've buttressed him up with excellent No. twos and threes. That should be all right." Of course, it never is. In fact in cases like that of West Bengal, it is bound to end in defeat, with quite often the good No. 2 or No. 3 having to bear the blame for the folly and rascality of the unworthy and wrongly-selected No. 1. Give a first-rate man first-rate men, and their combined effort and efficiency will be greater than the sum of the effort and efficiency of each of them. But put first-rate men under a rotten chief, and he will, more often than not, render them useless, sick at heart and utterly frustrated.

Law and order is the primary Bengal problem. Strong laws, Bengal already has. What is necessary is to use them against the real leaders of disorder, without fear and without favour. Also to make their followers realise that however influential their leaders, however many the guns they carry or the gunmen they control, authority is stronger and they cannot escape its grip; they can kill, it can kill more and always the top guilty. Political leaders who preach violence should be taught that counter-violence will not pass them by because they happen to be important in politics. In the condition to which Bengal has been reduced by the Ajoys, Jyotis, Naxalites, Dhavan, etc., the first requisite is an enlightened ruthlessness, that deals firmly and rigorously with those who foment and spearhead disorder. And none of this is possible without a chief of the type described above, to whom is given full discretion and freedom of action. May Mrs. Gandhi realise this even now!

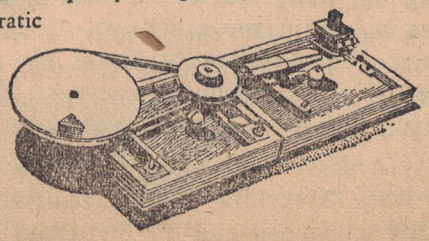
Some learned and distinguished men hold suppression of disorder in

Bengal's circumstances is more than preserving order. It is "political-moral-psychological-ideological." May be, but in cases of extreme lawlessness, the "isms" have to wait until discussion becomes possible. When dacoits are looting your house and dragging away your wife, the thing to do is to shoot them. After you've made them run and seized some of the wounded, by all means settle down to consider motivation, the making of new worlds, etc., with them, if you feel so inclined. But first use enough force against them. Our Indian minds love going off at a tangent. *X* steals *Y*'s watch in a bus. *Z* catches hold of *X*. *A*, *B* and *C* are not indignant with *X* and demand that he be handed over to the police. No, they go off into a discussion about what can have caused so presentable a fellow as *X* to steal, perhaps he comes from a broken home, perhaps, perhaps, perhaps. . . . Meanwhile, *Z*'s attention relaxing a little, *X* gives him a strong shove and while he is still reeling, pours out a string of abuse at the whole lot of them, dashes out of the bus into the traffic and gets lost to sight. *Y* is lucky if he has had the sense to seize his own property the moment *X* was caught. Sometimes *X* after being caught gets away with that also. There is a moral in this simple tale which may be applicable even to the over-aweing Bengal disorder disasters.

One nation: One people



"There is so much in common between people in the same State, under the same flag and owing undivided allegiance to it... that those who believe in India as a nation can have no minority or majority question. All are entitled to equal privileges, equal treatment... The state of our conception must be a secular, democratic state, having perfect harmony between different units."—*Mahatma Gandhi*



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OSTENTATION IN HIGH QUARTERS

In view of the current heated discussions on **OSTENTATION IN HIGH QUARTERS**, the following from articles published in May 1955, October 1956 and April 1958 will be of special interest to readers :

"Again, is a socialistic pattern of society with its emphasis on egalitarianism, which in the context of this country must necessarily mean simple living, likely to be brought about by a political party the leaders of which, while paying lip-homage to austerity, show by their behaviour, as soon as they attain positions of power, an inclination towards inequality and luxury ? Not for them the example of the Swiss President who, remaining in the modest suburban house he occupied before election, came in every morning to his office by bicycle or bus. Not content with being the lower middle-class men most of them are, they move up almost immediately into the upper class, altering their friends even to suit, as they think, their new positions. In the result, they get further and further away from the common man, however much they pride themselves on their knowledge of him, attained quite often through what they call contact at mass public meetings.

Conspicuous consumption is, on the whole, pleasing to them. They encourage by their presence gatherings at which a thousand or more people, who could easily afford to feed themselves, are feasted at the expense of one or other subscriber to their party funds. They revoked the very salutary rule limiting the number of those attending feasts to 50, and in some States, to 25. This restriction had made it possible for many sensible people of moderate means to avoid, without incurring odium, the unnecessary expenditure on weddings and other ceremonial occasions that custom decreed. In the state maintained through armed guards at the gates of Ministerial residences, the psychological vestiges of feudalism seem ever present.

That when this state of mind predominates, the chances of the flourishing of a real egalitarian society are very little, however great the emphasis in speech and writing on socialism, is clear from the Soviet example. With equality and fraternity as declared goals, with the total abolition, because of the revolution, of class distinctions, the feeling of superiority in the mind of the rulers has brought about a condition in which there is no egalitarianism.

If the Congress wishes the people to believe in the sincerity of its desire to attain the objective of the socialistic pattern of society, its leaders, more especially those in government, must demonstrate that sincerity in the normal pattern of their lives. The wearing of a white uniform and the eloquent preaching of far-away goals prove little."

* * * *

"For maintaining health in Indian conditions the diet of a vegetarian should contain 14 ounces of cereals, 3 of pulses, 4 of leafy vegetables, 6 of other vegetables, 2 of ghee and oil, 10 of milk and milk products, 3 of fruits and nuts and 2 of sugar or jaggery. Clearly when the diet of a person consists only of the cereals and pulses, his health must be affected very detrimentally. How much more so must it not be, when he cannot afford to buy even the necessary quantities of cereals and pulses, and has perforce to make do with less! Then he can only be described as semi-starved. Between 1/5th and 1/4th of our population is in this condition, about seven to nine crores of people unable, because of lack of resources, even to obtain 14 ounces of cereals and 3 of pulses. Quite a number too are very probably just at or slightly above this bare minimum level.

Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab has just left his post of Governor of Bombay to become the head of the Congress Party in Orissa, and its Chief Minister. For at least the last two weeks, the newspapers have been full of descriptions of banquets and feasts given in his honour.

The Chief Minister Mr. Morarji Desai entertained him last Saturday. The details are reported thus: "Covers were laid for over 50 guests. . . . The banquet was held on the lawns of Council Hall which were tastefully decorated and the illuminated dome of the Prince of Wales Museum in the background provided a fairyland setting." Nor is this anything new. The departure of Dr. Mahtab merely presents an occasion. Banquets, feasts, decorations, illuminations, these are always with us.

The Prime Minister of India lives in a palace. His cabinet colleagues live in luxurious bungalows. Each has an armed police or military guard at his gate, one or more cars in his garage. The Chief Ministers of States and their colleagues are similarly accommodated, guarded and vehicled. Generally the houses are furnished at State expense. Lavish official and non-official entertainments are the rule, both in Delhi and at State capitals.

Is there not something extremely incongruous between these two pictures and the first? There might not be, of course, in certain circumstances. Supposing the men in power were there by right of conquest, the chiefs of an army that had destroyed the national forces, they might well regard themselves as entitled to these fruits of victory. Supposing they were there by right of inheritance, autocratic Amuraths following upon autocratic Amuraths, again there might appear no incongruity. Supposing they were the Polit Bureau of a Communist party that had seized power and was ruthlessly enforcing its will upon the people through the State apparatus, this behaviour would seem entirely in accord with the situation.

But these men are not conquering chiefs, hereditary despotic monarchs or a Communist oligarchy. They are the duly elected representatives of a free democracy, chosen by their colleagues for [illegible] of pre-eminence because they consider them to have political acumen and wisdom. Many of them are worthy individuals, esteemable in their own right. What causes such men to act thus, to be blind to the incongruity of their behaviour? Perhaps it is belief in the ancient saying that power means

grandeur. There may be the apprehension that if they do not live grandly, they may fail to impress the people with the reality of their power. Perhaps it is the tendency to consuicuous consumption and display inherent in so many of us, to which they are able to give full vent in their exalted positions. Perhaps it is merely conformity with usage, the unwillingness to break away from a pattern of behaviour sacrosanct to authority in the past. Perhaps in addition there is an element of competition, a desire to impress foreigners, to show themselves to be even greater than their predecessors in a previous regime.

Let the Ministers be content with simple two or three bedroom flats not far from their place of work, let them walk or ride on bicycles from their homes to it, dispensing with separate cars and keeping only two or three as a pool for visits to distant sites, let them set their faces severely against large parties and lavish entertainment, and a new spirit will soon become apparent throughout the land. No longer wi[illegible] the emphasis be all the time on reward. Men will be willing to cor[illegible]ider responsibility sufficient reward, as indeed do some even now. Suggestions now taken seriously, such as that of the Government of India's favourite American expert that Rs. 4,000 a month is not high enough salary, will then receive only the contempt they merit. Amongst the common people, the semi-starved and those just above them, will begin to emerge an appreciation of government and an understanding of its sincerity that will greatly facilitate its tasks and cause even those that have almost nothing to make some contribution.

When the chief men in a government or party merely preach, the reply is generally a shrugging of shoulders. Only when they preach according to their practice, when their own bona fides are established by clear conduct, can they hope that their preaching will produce the desired results."

* * * *

"Simplicity of living, the avoidance of ostentation and grandeur, these were what the Indian people expected of the Congress in power. Compliance with these would have brought to the Congress both respect and affection. But at Delhi and the State capitals are to be found in high party officials, Congress Governors and Ministers, a body of men who seem intent on vieing in their manner of living, personal and official, not only with the Lat and Counseller Sahebs of the immediate past, but even on going beyond them to the Grand Moghul, his Subedars and Rajahs.

The Adviser would put out the electric lights in the rooms he was not using, and later, all the lights in his bu[illegible]e perhaps one in the porch, but the residences of Ministers in many a state capital blaze with electric lights all night long. The Adviser was content with a brick compound wall built many years ago, painted yellow and white, but the Minister must replace it with ornamental stone at a cost of thousands to the public.

Luxury in office and home, and a high standard of amenities for the rulers, are perhaps regarded as some compensation for the poverty of the country ruled over. Public functions and edifices must be on the same grandiose scale. Never, perhaps has there been such expenditure on mere showing-off as today ; never such an efflorescence of building at the public cost in cities and towns all over the country.

Augustus found Rome of brick and left it of marble, but Augustus obtained the money from colonial areas abroad. He gave the Romans something for nothing. The Congress has neither Augustus' taste nor his capacity. It diverts the funds of the country, badly needed for essential purposes, to garish structures."

The sensible, the honest, hearken to advi e ; the foolish, the corrupt learn not even from experienc.

Not In Our Stars, A. D. Gorwala, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1958.

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"A NEST OF SINGING BIRDS"

NO ONE'S UGLY ANY MORE

1. REMOVAL TO METROPOLIS

Denied sight of the blue jacarandas
that grew in father's house
I must feast on sunflowers
whose seeds parrots peck
and call three trees a park;
rejoice that on some days one can see
the trains spanning the creek
and it didn't rain at eight and six.

2. PRISONS OF FREEDOM

Perhaps when you are gone, I'll
re-educate myself in the ways
of museums, seminars, recitals, films.
Now enclosed in small rooms we share
memories of rain-lapped trees and quiet
waiting beside ponds for kingfishers' dive.

3. BY BREAD ALONE

I'm painfully acclamatised
to not flinching at beggars.
It's only a child that doesn't know
it begs. Ashamed, I put shrinking
my hand, fisted, on its back
shake my head. It's only a child
that knows refusal very well.

4. PEOPLE WHO NEED PEOPLE

It's the only landscape—
a sea of people bordering
the bitter limit of the sea.
If all the noses were one nose
and all the heads were one
they'd outstone
Gomateshwara, and be monument
to brotherly love, for yet
no one has picked my pocket
nor into my house broken,
I, as yet, not run over by a bus.

5. SHOES

On pavements in suburbs, old men sell
used shirts, patched pyjamas, shapeless jackets and shoes.
They can fit no human foot.
Atrocious in their hardened age
they are bought by affluent
mendicants and tied
to stumps of knees
and palms of hands.

6. LORD OF THE SORROWS, WEEKLY

Wednesdays, they collect at Mahim.
Tuesdays and fridays, the devis claim
them: Prabha, Mumba, Mahalaxmi.
Mondays, thursdays: Shiva and Datta,
and saturdays, the Hanuman.
The mosques are lit up on fridays too,
and while the rest
rest on sundays, some make
weekly peace with priest and God.
About the end of May
they pray for rain, even those that huddle
precariously at edge of sea.
For all recall dimly
the earth under macadam
that hummed to seasons once
and needs rain.

7. WHERE DO THE LONELY PEOPLE LIVE?

There have been times
when I heard a woman
next to me pause in breathing
to ask my age or children,
at least the time.
There is never any time and none
of us bears the usual marks
such as: mother, whore, matron, maid.
Women, men, sternfaced, lookalike
go about in herds.

I have heard of the great silence
of cities where lonely men
in garret rooms look upon
falling rain.

8. THIS FAIR ISLE: A REPORT

From the sea it looks [illegible]reen
embracing in many a[illegible]ns
(at marine drive, or worli, or bandra or basein)
the boat that tries to bob
away. In season
gulmohrs brush it with love
hills and roofs smudge horizon
spiked with lighted columns.
From the sea it must've looked thus
to many unknowing eyes passing by.

After all, even from land the fools
flock from hill and plain, hoping
the pavement's gold leaf,
found fit only to sleep on
when it was the season.
Do not bathe at sea;
the effluence, unbelievable.

9. MY LOVE IS LIKE . . .

Families of people creep out to walk
holding children by the hand,
from cracks in walls, and unanimous, charge
to buy flowers, coconuts, baloons and bhel.
We met them on the sand.
in the bus, along shops and stalls
in strange disguises of love.
Towards evening, star[illegible]topped
to see ourselves in[illegible]glass.
It was only anoth[illegible]pair
holding each other by the hand
miming reflections of love.

10. A DREAM OF FIRES

I have met her in the lift,
waiting in queues, drinking lemonade
at lunch on the sidewalk,
not unhappy. She changes her rings,
brooches, shoes, drops, beads and bangles
to match her dress—approximates.

Then there's Salome, always a cool
finely drawn, precise line above

and below her eye. No ornaments mar
a perfect fit. Her look held hop
and inquiry. We have dreamt ll
in discrete wombs
of giants to stride our earth
and no one's ugly any more.

—Gauri Deshpande

DADYSETH

I followed him as he left the body, every limb
Turning to anthracite, his mind half conscious and arctic
As the late October night closed like thick gas around him.
The cancer turned quickly rampant, now the opposing
Spirit had withdrawn ; lymph and gland,
The stopped arterial flow, now all turned iron,
Eyes to dull stones, the skin in thirteen minutes
A visible brown green. The body at last
Became triumphantly itself, not Him. And He
Turning slowly from the thing he had become
For fifteen months, was now Himself :
Trudging painfully away from us under a sky like iron
Blazoned with eight o'clock Bombay stars,
Remembering us a little, waving his handkerchief
Shyly almost, his last pennant. They stopped him at the pass
Before the five peaks.

Often he returns now, not always rem...ng
Himself as dead, only half aware
He was once my father. He comes, simply familiar
As one who has the right :
No door is closed against him, no circle drawn.
I drop my magic breastplate as he enters
To claim his due of friendship,
To talk as we could never talk in life,
Exert affection for a four year old grand-daughter,
or simply watch bemused
A pattern magical to him, as time flows round us.

I saw him again yesterday (having learnt to distinguish
Fantasy from the true Imagination
Which alone brings inwardly
Us to the returning dead) and at his word have set this down :

A memorial not to him or to his vanished past
But to what survives :
This strange haunting of Love.

—K. D. Katrak

FROM DURYODHANA'S LETTER

You know this war is tremendous fun,
Our boys never had so fine a time.
Plenty of girls and lots of gold,
Anything indeed just for the taking.
Countless old men, Women and kids
Cannon fodder—no need to fight.
They say the whole world feels with them,
But we have all the big shots with us
Krishna is, of course, their cart-driver
But he keeps sitting at the back
And goes on talking all the time.
These Pandavas have no weapons at all :
Some primitive arrows and spears.
Some fight like cobras
Till they writhe like worms.
But they have no knowledge of my might
And the mighty help of [illegible]hful friends.
Like Bacchus will I be[illegible] with their blood
And roast their flesh on their burning hearths
They dream of avenging Draupadi's rape
And the insults heaped on their foul parents !
Our boys have orders to smash everything :
The sheer pleasure of destruction is great.
I think we might win at the end
But it won't matter if we don't ;
All that matters is the thrill of it all,
A confidence-booster to our men at arms
Who, as you know, haven't won a war.

FROM ROMANCE TO RITUAL

When the job is done and the convulsions back
The pittance gained and the sun told off
Like an unfanged snake in a padded cage
Memories plough through nooks long stuffed.
Those weary faces swarming in waves
Packed like sardines in conch-like shells

I watch with cool distance and sneer unseen
Gliding from Dodge to Deccan Queen!

That young man with his seedy look
Hasn't made his grade, perhaps never will.
Those days are gone when I thundered and fumed
And pined alone in cafe nooks;
Revelled in Kafka, Beckett and Brecht
And struggled whole nights with psychopaths . . .
"Encounter" and "Femina" for the wife,
"Sunshine" for the kids—quits a cultured life!

Now no need for the dizzy pate
To cook up reviews and weekend stuff
Nor turn into verse what won't fit prose.
The fire is out since the Madame came
With Ambassador and dowry to boot
With Kolynos smile and the Aspro look—
Portias come handy where Shylocks hold sway
Though fancy shines best in sloughed-off-days.

Well, it's all cosy and tolerable now
But for the annual presents a
The souvenir of the day of bond
The end of the jasmine in cul de sac.
The girl you loved and the woman you wed
Are all the same when the fire is spent.
No gain means much when you had to part
with what you thought was nearest to your heart.

I hope she will like the newest gift,
The fabric is latest and she must like.
"Gee, what a lark!" A welcome change
From the dull routine. No need to look
Back across the blue glass panes.
Yet heaven can't lure when you have seen hell—
Where poverty fornicates with crime:
Bide your time lad, bide your time.

A. K. C. Panikkar

FOR A FRIENDLY CRITIC

Awareness of acute
deficiences, my own
and other people's, counterpoints
my daily fiction, riddled with the spirit.
I talk of ugly privacies
as though of roses,
flaunting them in button-holes
mistrustfully. Tell me
your improprieties
and I will make them beautiful.
Your motives do not matter,
your delirium does. The moral
is the life that you have lived
not the doctrine [illegible]ay-dream.
You are not t[illegible]sts
but the disease, the epidemic.
Do you think you are my critic?
Buy a mirror, learn to use it.
I shall be around to encourage
admonish, recognise
the first shudder of genuine feeling.
I too have headed for the open sea
but what's the use? We are land-lubbers.
You look more sun-burnt
than I can ever be, yet all
you have gained is a rough weather skin.
I am protected by intellectuality,
you by your lack of it.
Neither knows
his nakedness,
We are both as reticent
as chorus girls
who dance for money.

—Nissim Ezekiel

GHANASHYAM

Ghanashyam,
You have like a koel built your nest in the arbour of my heart.
My life, until now a sleeping jungle is atlast astir with music.
You lead me along a route I have never known before
But at each turn when I near you
Like a spectral flame you vanish.
The flame of my prayer-lamp holds captive my future
I gaze into the red eye of death
The hot stare of truth unveiled.
Life is moisture
Life is water, semen and blood.
Death is drought
Death is the hot sauna leading to cool rest-rooms
Death is the last, lost sob of the relative
Beside the red-walled morgue.
O Shyam, my Ghanashyam
With words I weave a raiment for you
With songs a sky
With such music I liberate in the oceans their fervid dances
We played once a husk-game, my lover and I
His body needing mine,
His ageing body in its pride needing the need for mine
And each time his lust was quietened
And he turned his back on me
In panic I asked Dont you want me any longer dont you want me
Dont you dont you
In love when the snow slowly began to fall
Like a bird I migrated to warmer climes
That was my only method of survival
In this tragic game the unwise like children play
And often lose in
At three in the morning
I wake trembling from dreams of a stark white loneliness,
Like bleached bones cracking in the desert-sun was my loneliness,
And each time my husband,
His mouth bitter with sleep,
Kisses, mumbling to me of love.
But if he is you and I am you
Who is loving who
Who is the husk who the kernel
Where is the body where is the soul
You come in strange forms

And your names are many.
Is it then a fact that I love the disguise
And the name more than I love you?
Can I consciously weaken bonds?
The child's umbilical cord shrivels and falls
But new connections begin, new traps arise
And new pains
Ghanashyam,
The cell of the eternal sun,
The blood of the eternal fire,
The hue of the summer-air,
I want a peace that I can tote
Like an infant in my arms
I want a peace that will do...
In the whites of my eyes when I smile
The ones in saffron robes told me of you
And when they left
I thought only of what they left unsaid
Wisdom must come in silence
When the guests have gone
The plates are washed
And the lights put out
Wisdom must steal in like a breeze
From beneath the shuttered door
Shyam o Ghanashyam
You have like a fisherman cast your net in the narrows
Of my mind
And towards you my thoughts today
Must race like enchanted fish. . . .

—Kamala Das

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THE AHMEDABAD RIOTS INQUIRY REPORT

A. G. NOORANI

THE Ahmedabad Riots should shame every Indian. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into these riots should make him proud. The riots took a heavy toll of human life and property. The Report is a model of judicial thoroughness and objectivity and proves, once again, what a blessing an uncommitted judiciary is. One hopes that the Report, priced at a mere Rs. 15.80, will be read and studied. This is what reports are for. It has its errors. None of these, however, in any way detracts from the high quality of the document. The Raghubar Dayal Report on the Ranchi Riots is unworthy of being mentioned along with it and it is the fortification of the criticisms made of that shoddy document that the Ahmedabad Inquiry did not follow its queer procedure.

The Ahmedabad riots began on September 18, 1969. On October 13, 1969, the Government of Gujarat set up a Commission of Inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, to inquire into "the causes and course of the communal disturbances" not only in Ahmedabad but also in other parts of the State, the adequacy of the administrative measures to prevent and deal with the riots, and to make recommendations for preventing their recurrence. The Commission consisted of Mr. Justice Jaganmohan Reddy of the Supreme Court and two Judges of the High Court of Gujarat, Mr. Justice N. K. Vakil and Mr. Justice A. S. Sarela. Their Report, which is unanimous, was submitted on October 24, 1970. The State Government sat on it till well past the mid-term poll and decided to publish it only on March 9, 1971. But on that day a mere pressnote was issued. The full text was actually released days later.

The Report fully describes the procedure a judicial inquiry has to follow and is a good answer to those who complain of the delays in the proceedings of such bodies. It renders a service in unearthing much that would otherwise have been suppressed and misrepresented. But, additionally, it provides much useful information to students of law and of public administration and also to students of media of mass communication. The chapter on the tendentious press reporting and the circulation and impact of rumours is very revealing.

"In the case of Commission witnesses, no cross-examination was permitted, but if the representative of any organization wanted the Commission to examine them on any particular aspect or point, they were permitted to suggest to the Commission the particular aspect or point and if these had not already been covered and were relevant, the Commission examined the witness on those aspects." It is submitted that this was an erroneous decision and is opposed to the settled practice, both in Courts of law and in judicial inquiries.

It was initially accepted by all the parties but some had second thoughts later. The Commission refused to alter its decision. One of the reasons which weighed with it was that otherwise the cross-examination of witnesses like the Chief Minister, the Deputy Home Minister and Mr. Balraj Mudhok might lead to an "acrimonious and unseemly dialogue." But the Commission is amply empowered to prevent such a cross-examination. The Commission was liberal in accepting the suggested questions, but that is different from cross-examination proper. One also fails to understand why these three gentlemen appeared as Commission witnesses and not as those of Government and the Jan Sangh, respectively.

Unfortunately the Commission did not have the assistance of an independent counsel of its own. His absence was sorely felt. "We felt during this inquiry that if Commissions of Inquiry have to do any useful work, they should have the assistance of some independent agency to collect and collate material or at any rate a lawyer to assist the Commission who will not espouse the cause of any agency as if in a civil or criminal trial." But, it was, surely, open to the Commission to have appointed its own counsel to assist it.

As for the scope of Inquiry, the Commission did address itself to the question "Were there any organisations and groups in the city and other places in the State, fomenting, commenting tension or directly or indirectly creating provocative situations?" However, this was not as a specific mandate given to the Commission, but only in order to discover the causes. The Commission declined to examine the "philosophies, ideologies or the nuances" of the political parties in order to assess "their likely impact in arousing communal feelings." But it was prepared to consider material to show that a group had created communal tension "resulting in the riots". This, with respect, was a correct reading of the terms of reference as they stood.

The State Government's behaviour before the Commission was, to say the least, churlish. At the stage of argument it made a grievance that the Commission had wrongly refused to consider "the deeper causes" of communal riots. This was done in terms of asperity and acerbity, and quite inconsistently, too. For, the complaint itself remarked that to consider such "deeper causes" the Centre would have to appoint "a High Power Commission on all India level".

The Commission said "What we are concerned with is the nearness of such incidents that had occurred before the Jagannath temple incident which are likely to justify an inference that latent communal tension was being built up in a way as was likely to contribute to riots of such magnitude and ferocity."

The question simply was this: What was the communal atmosphere in Gujarat in general and in Ahmedabad in particular before the fateful day of September 18, 1969?

The paradox of the situation was that the communal atmosphere in Ahmedabad then was tense but the riots were unexpected. "The fuel had been gathered which required only a match to set it on fire and a fan

to fan the city ablaze." Yet there was no expectation of riots nor was any prior warning of them given to the State Government by the Centre. "There was no alert in the letter dated April 22, 1969, from the Secretary to the (Union) Home Ministry to the Gujarat Government stating that riots will take place" the State's Chief Secretary said. But one wonders if it did not warn of the deterioration in the communal situation. Unfortunately, it has not been published though it was shown to the Commission.

The Commission rejected the allegations that a Conference of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema held in Ahmedabad in June 1968 and an R.S.S. rally held there in December 1968 created communal tension. It next considered the four events of 1969—The Quran incident, the Al Aqsa procession, the Ramayan incident and Mr. Balraj Madhok's speeches.

On March 11, 1969, the police tried to move aside a hand-cart of books and, in doing so, accidentally toppled it. Among the books was a copy of the Quran. The owner protested, a crowd collected and started attacking the police. Another came later, demanded an apology and the police authority said that if anyone's religious feelings were hurt, it was sorry.

Next came the Al Aqsa procession in August. Though peaceful, it "would appear to have created a reaction on some sections of the Hindu mind which began to recall past events and read all sorts of implications."

On September 4, Janmashtami Day, a Ramlila programme was being conducted. Pandit Balkrishna who was performing the same received a message that he was wanted at the police station by the P.S.I. He promised to go later but the policemen returned with the P.S.I. Mr. Shaikh who asked the people to disperse. He dispersed them by force, hit the table on which the Ramayana was kept with the result that the Ramayan and 'Arti' fell down. The charge that he kicked the Ramayan was proved to be false. The next morning the person performing and the residents of the chawl, of both communities, complained against the P.S.I. who was immediately transferred. But the police was slack in dealing with the complaint itself.

Meanwhile, an agitation had been launched. An organisation under the name of Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti was set up. Its convener was "an old R.S.S. member", Harishchandra Panchal. A report by the Deputy Commissioner of Police revealed the united front tactics. "It was decided that instead of openly supporting the movement in the name of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh the same may be started in the name of Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti."

As the Commission remarks "Jan Sangh workers in the city seem to have taken over the agitation under the guise of Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti." It adds, after summing up the evidence, "In light of all this, can it be said with any justification that the police did not know that the Jan Sangh workers and other communal-minded persons were not creating communal trouble in Ahmedabad." The agitation ended, the Samiti stayed on.

Mr. Madhok delivered two speeches in Ahmedabad. One, on Septem-

ber 14, was at Ahmedabad Military and Rifle Training Association and the other, two days later, was under the auspices of the City's Junior Chamber. The former was not covered by the Special Branch of the police ; the latter was, but no shorthand verbatim report was taken down. The former speech was taped, however. "The evidence read as a whole leads us not to an unreasonable inference that the police authorities as well as the Government Pleader for reasons best known to them did not intend to disclose the existence of the tape." Eventually, the Commission did get it.

The Report says "The speech of 14th September, considered as a whole, in our view, was one which concentrates on the threat of Pakistan against India. That is the main theme pervading and running through the entire two-hours of exhortation. In that context, though Shri Balraj Madhok spent comparatively little time in dealing with the internal danger, he dealt with the part played by Indian Muslims in the past and the need to 'Bharatiyakaran' them. The assumption made in the speech in relation to the Indian Muslims was bound to create resentment among them as indeed is apparent from the manner the several organisations appearing for the Muslim interest reacted to this speech and also create a feeling of resentment among the Hindus against the Muslims by causing a doubt as to the loyalty which is implied in the reasons given by him to 'Bharatiyakaran' them. In his evidence, Shri Madhok when he referred to 'Bharatiyakaran' of Muslims, said that he did not have in his mind Muslims alone, but all communities." This was disbelieved. "Shri Madhok's explanation during the evidence in answer to the questions suggested by several organisations that he used the word 'Bharatiyakaran' as including not only Muslims but all Indians whose loyalty is in doubt, cannot, in our view, be accepted as being wholly consistent with his speech inasmuch as it was likely to create an impression in those who heard it that it was the Muslims alone who were being referred to in the context of 'Bharatiyakaran'."

But, the Commission held, "There was nothing in the speech of Shri Madhok—though some portions of it, particularly the latter part of his speech of 14th September 1969, could well be resented by the Muslims of India—as was likely to excite or incite the Hindus, it was, as Shri Prabhu stated, a speech delivered to the intelligentsia who could not be said to be urged by excitement to commit violence." This is fair enough. But a speaker "casting a doubt as to the loyalty" of Muslims in the tense atmosphere can surely be said to have aggravated it. All the Commission exculpates him from is actual incitement to violence and no more. Its disapproval is patent.

Against this entire background the events of September 18 and beyond must be assessed. This resumé is drawn from the Report. "The incident which was the immediate cause of the starting of the riots is stated to have occurred under the following circumstances. There was a venerated saint of the Muslims known as 'Pir Bukhari Saheb' and his 'Durgah' is known as 'Bukhari Saheb's Chilla', situated outside the Jamalpur Gate

and near Jamalpur Chakla. This 'Chilla' is venerated by the Muslims and each year an Urs is held in honour of the saint, which is celebrated as a festival. At this Urs is gathered a great concourse of Muslims—men, women and children, and there are also temporary shops put up on either side of the road from Behrampura Chowkie to Jamalpur gate. The entire length of the road and the pavements on either side are filled with throngs which start from 8.00 a.m. and increase as day passes, reaching the maximum by about 2.00 to 3.00 p.m. . . .

"In the vicinity of the Bukhari Saheb's Chilla near the Jamalpur gate about a furlong from the Chilla is situated the Jagannath temple which is not only venerated by the Hindus of the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, but also by the people in other parts of India. This temple is said to be about 375 years old and it is also well-known for its cosmopolitan attitude where people of all creeds, irrespective of their caste, creed and religion, are fed. Muslim Fakirs and poor Muslims are also fed and given milk, curds and food-stuffs, etc. The Mugal Emperors also seem to have given protection to this temple by commanding through their 'Farmans' that every one should respect this temple. . . .

"The cows of the temple number about 800 to 1000 and each day these cows go to graze to the sewage farm of the temple and return in the afternoon in one or two batches. On the day of the incident, viz. on 18th September 1969, at about 3.30 p.m., the first batch of cows of about

400 came from the direction of Behrampura chowky accompanied by the keepers. The 'Sadhus' met these cows and accompanied them to the temple safely. About 15 minutes thereafter, the second batch of cows came with the keepers and when they came, there was some confrontation between the Muslims taking part in the Urs who had gathered there and the 'Sadhus' which led to an altercation between them, as a result of which it was alleged that the 'Sadhus' were beaten by the Muslims and chased into the temple."

What exactly happened ? The organizers of the Urs had announced that the cows were ariving from the sewage farm. On this announcement being made, the road to the temple was cleared. No such announcement was made before the cows in the second batch came with the result that when they did, they shied and ran about.

In the disturbance, an altercation took place between the Sadhus of the temple and some of the Muslims in the Urs in which the Sadhus were attacked and injuries inflicted on them. This was followed by stone-throwing as a result of which the glass in the facades on the main door of the temple, which had in them the images of the Mahant and Shri Krishna, was broken.

"The evidence, in our view, does not disclose that the incident at the Jagannath temple can be said to be an attack on the temple as such. If that was so, there was nothing to stop serious damage being done to the temple, both outside and inside. On the other hand, the damage to it was negligible. The persons who are involved were merely concerned with the 'Sadhus' in respect of the incident caused by the shying of the cows. The incident initially arose because of this circumstance, namely of the shying of the cows and not because the people in the crowd wanted to attack the sadhus or Hindus as such. But, as the Commissioner of Police said, the Jagannath temple got involved in this incident because the Sadhus with whom the fight took place belonged to the temple, the altercation took place near the temple, and the stone-throwing was near the temple. The shouting by the crowd, the chasing of the Sadhus into the temple and the breaking of the glass facade in front of the main gate with photo of Shri Narsinhdasji and Shree Krishna with a cow and of Shree Krishna in the side facade—all this was construed as an attack on the temple."

The Report says "we do not think that the temple incident was pre-planned", and the crowd was not armed with hockey sticks, pipes or acid bulbs, as had been alleged.

Immediately after the incident the Muslim leaders came to the temple and offered to give an apology, but the Sadhus refused to accept any apology or to see them. Already during the night several incidents took place at Raipur and Khadia, of which more later. The press flashed the news about the attack on the temple in broad headlines. The Police authorities called a peace conference on the morning of September 19th. Thereafter the Commissioner of Police accompanied by some Hindu and Muslim leaders went to the temple to persuade the Sadhus to give up

their fast. There were already 400 to 500 people present; and the proceedings had hardly begun when one Pandit Harshadasji got up and made an inflammatory speech. He had made a similar speech the evening before saying that it was not for the Mahant to accept any apology but for the people to decide what course they should take. It was an ominous utterance.

The Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti held a public meeting on September 19, which its leaders had promised that very day in the peace committee meeting to postpone by two days. Mr. Shambhu Maharaj addressed the meeting "and the peace in the area was disturbed." In fact, the "crowd became riotous."

The Ahmedabad riots had well and truly begun. In the night of September 18 Hindu crowds attacked Muslim properties and religious institutions. The Commission's resumé of this incident makes painful reading. Consider this incident: "The Notable Washing Company, which is mentioned in the first incident, is alleged by the Central Relief Committee to be only about 100 paces from the Raipur Police chowkey but is, at any rate, admitted by the Commissioner of Police and Police Inspector Shri B. H. Zala (G.W. 19) to be about a furlong from that chowkey. Sub-Inspector N. R. Patil was on duty at Raipur Police Chowkey at 23.38 hours on the 18th when a mob passed by that chowkey. He immediately informed the control and also asked for a mobile to be sent. This message is entered at entry No. 6 of 18th September 1969 of the main control register (Ex. G/47). The entry records the message of Shri Patil and says that the mobile P. 4 was sent from Karanj at 23.29 (which appears to be a mistake for 23.39) and Police Inspector, Kalupur, Shri Zala, was informed at 23.45 hours *but at the same time the instructions issued to Shri Patil at* 23.50 *hours by the control as evidenced by the entry* (*Ex. G. 47/1*) *were that the police was not to disturb the mob if it was of one community and watch be kept.* Obviously, having regard to these instructions, the Sub-Inspector did not take any action against the mob. It was a Hindu locality and it is contended that it was a Hindu mob" (italics mine throughout). This is truly astonishing.

The Commission summarises the incidents in these words: "The discussion of the incidents which happened during the night between the 18th and 19th of September establishes, in our opinion, the following facts: (i) Large Hindu crowds were moving about selecting Muslim properties and Muslim religious places for damage and arson. (ii) The crowds were also anxious to see that the fire brigade does not put out the fire and they were putting obstacles in the way of the first brigade from reaching the place of fire. (iii) The very first crowd which started on this career was shouting the slogans 'Hindu Dharma Zindabad' and 'Jai Jagannath'. (iv) *The police were instructed at the beginning not to disturb the crowd if it was of one community and those instructions appear to have been taken literally and no force was used on the crowds.* It is difficult to believe that notwithstanding the arrival of high police officers with men there immediately after the control received the

message all the members of the mischievous crowd had disappeared. There is positive evidence of the fire brigade officers to the contrary. (v) The number of arrests made, namely four, was very small having regard to the number of incidents and number of persons who were stated to have formed the mobs and those four were arrested only because they had actually entered the mosque." The Commission found that the police had intelligence reports in advance that Muslim properties were to be attacked in these very localities. Yet the police did nothing and even when the crowds were at work the police turned a blind eye. It is important to bear this in mind when we discuss the Commission's comments on the police officers.

The Commission meticulously discusses the course of the riots thereafter. There was violence by the Muslims as well. "It is true that there were also Muslim mobs in the initial stages which had caused damage to property and person in the walled area, but that was as a consequence of the reaction of the attack by the Hindus of their person and property. Though this was the position in the initial stage and later in some areas, there were attacks on some individual Hindus in the suburban area and firing by Muslims from Soneria blocks, the action of the Hindu crowds had no relation to some of these incidents and was massive and became organised as the course of the riots continued."

"It would be first relevant to draw attention to the fact that curfew was in substance observed in breach than in observance. The chronological statements and the control room entries disclose a picture of roaming crowds of hundreds and thousonds doing mischief without hindrance. A considerable number of offences have taken place, it is admitted, in front or very near the police stations or police chowkies, and in some of the instances massive damage has been caused. . . ."

The police authorities failed the Commission as they had failed the people. "The impression we got was that the police was not prepared to place any evidence before us or speak about any circumstance which will show that crowds had rampaged in a systematic manner or that they were being supplied with weapons, or that the targets were being traced with the help of the electoral lists or some lists. On all these matters we questioned the police witnesses closely but there was a uniform denial in almost stereotyped answers, typical of which were 'I can neither affirm or deny', 'it is not in my knowledge', 'I am not aware', etc."

The Commission's own finding is to the contrary. "We cannot, therefore, accept the police case that the courses of riots do not show that they were organised or directed. There must have been some agency or agencies which must have exploited the Jagannath temple incident. We have already noticed in Chapter VI that according to the special report of the Commissioner of Police in respect of the Ramayan incident, the agitation had received the blessing of the local Bharatiya Jan Sangh workers who did not want to involve themselves directly but suggested the formation of an organization known as Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti with Harishchandra Panchal, an old R.S.S. worker, as its convener."

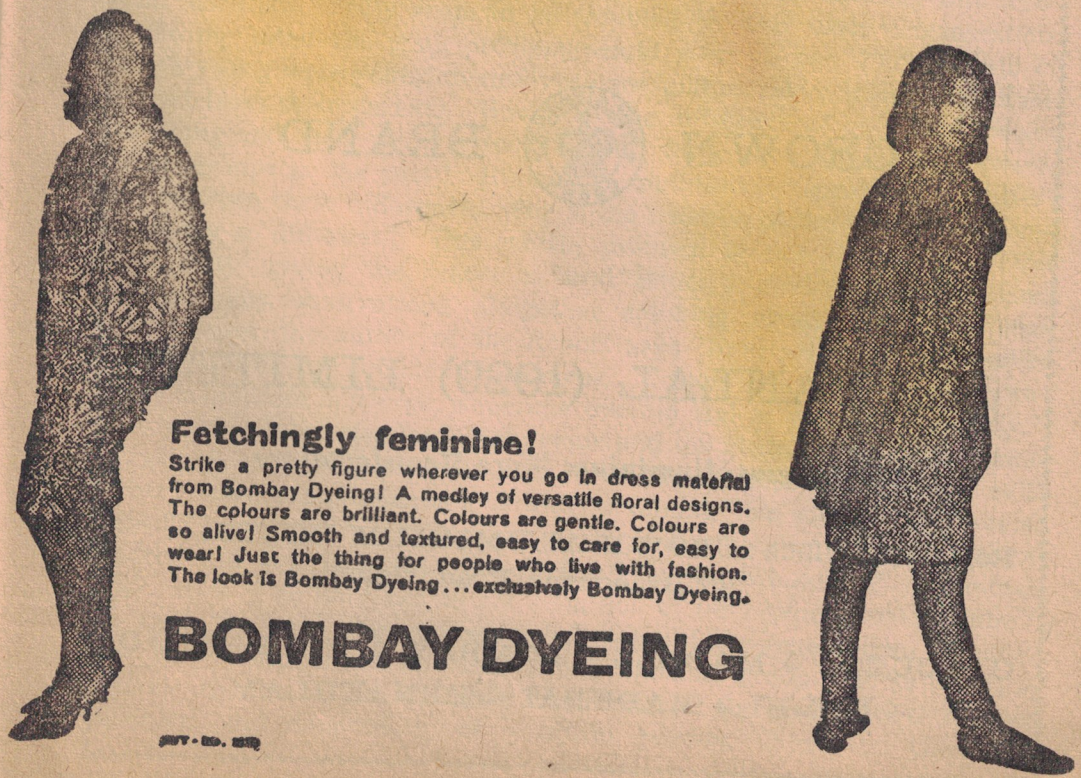
Yet, the Commissioner of Police sought to deny that the Samiti was a Jan Sangh front. "It was put to the Commissioner of Police in cross-examination that the Jan Sangh and R.S.S. leaders and some fanatic Hindus were moving about in the city freely encouraging Hindus to commit riots. He denied it but added that some Jan Sangh and R.S.S. leaders were moving about trying to restore peace, but later he admitted that during the riots the behaviour of Shri Gajendragadkar and some Jan Sangh leaders was quite different and due to the apprehension which he felt about them after the riots, he detained them under the Preventive Detention Act though he added that he detained some Communist leaders also. This evidence as a whole indicates that the police had reason to believe that some local Jan Sangh leaders and workers were actively participating in the riots though these officers in their affidavits had not given any such indication and even in cross-examination attempts were made to prevaricate and plead ignorance of such participation."

The Commission, however, proceeds to say "We have nothing to indicate that Bharatiya Jan Sangh party and for that matter the Hindu Maha Sabha party or R.S.S. Organization as such, *as an all India party or organization* had taken part or was involved. The evidence relating to participation of some of the workers of these parties or organizations is not by itself sufficient to justify the inference of the participation of the aforesaid parties as all India Parties or Organizations." But this was nobody's case either; no one had alleged that the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the R.S.S. or the Hindu Mahasabha had, sitting in Delhi, formally decided to create riots. The Commission found that the Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti, the Jan Sangh's front organisation, had issued pamphlets calling on the Hindus "to prepare for 'Dharma Yudha' without waiting for justice to be done by the Government, to sever all economic and social relations with the community that has attacked their religion, viz. the Muslims."

"We have dealt with the evidence at length on every aspect of the riots which was presented before us and we cannot on that evidence hold that whatever defects, shortcomings or the ineffectiveness of the police in controlling the riots and giving help to those who were exposed to danger in time, that either the Police Force as such or a large majority of the officers have exhibited any such anti-Muslim attitude." However, the Commission's own findings in regard to the course of the riots is suggestive of partiality on the part of the police.

This then is the picture that emerges from the Commission's Report. One might disagree with its conclusions, here and there, but one cannot but admire its detachment, its painstaking labours, and the spirit which has animated it. The Ahmedabad riots took a heavy toll of life and caused great damage to property. The number of persons injured was about 377 and the number found dead was 660, of whom 430 were identified as Muslims, 240 Hindus, and 58 others while the rest could not be identified. 487 Hindus, 582 Muslims and 15 others were injured. Damage to property "both moveable and immoveable is estimated at Rs. 4,23,24,069.54 out of which the damage to Hindu property was Rs. 75,85,845.00

and of Muslim property was Rs. 3,47,38,224.54." The Muslims are certainly not free from blame. The attack on the Sadhus of the Jagannath temple was, on any reckoning, a serious offence ; but the point of the matter is that this offence was exploited by certain recognised political elements and a holocaust let loose while the police sat by inactively. All this would have remained buried and forgotten but for the three Judges who toiled over a year that justice might be done.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BOOK-REVIEWS

INTER-GENERATIONAL CONFLICT IN INDIA

(Nachiketa Publication, Bombay)

BAHIRJI

A famous historian of the Maratha Period once remarked that Marathi literature would stop growing completely if the mail steamer from England stopped. The same rule seems to apply to the expansion of literature dealing with the humanities, especially on the sociological side. This book is a case in point. Western sociologists and political scientists having shown themselves greatly concerned about the conflict between generations after various student unrest incidents, Indian sociologists and intellectuals seem to think they also must write about "Inter-generational Conflict" though it is doubtful whether a conflict of a similar kind exists here at all.

The book falls into three parts : (a) 'Report of Study' being a survey of the attitudes and opinions of parents and their children on various subjects. (b) Papers from different scholars on subjects which they think are associated with the conflict. (c) A summary of the group discussions which took place at a seminar.

Throughout the book nowhere is stated what the writers and discussants mean by a generation. Do the participants mean a biological generation or a cultural generation? Not defining one's concepts very clearly is neither science not following the scientific method, but these social scientists hardly seem to be troubled by that basic consideration.

To my mind the main problem would seem to be : The parents of today's young were young themselves once, and on many issues must have differed from their parents. How does the difference of opinion between the young and their parents today differ from the difference between similar groups in the past ? If there is, qualitatively speaking, no difference between these differences, why is the reaction of the younger generation today so different ? This central problem is not discussed in the book. After giving the reader several tables, a good deal of data, and making many observations, altogether covering about a hundred and twenty pages, the author of the Report says "Inter-generational Conflict is a very subtle and complex phenomena . . . their views (the new generation's) sometimes converge, sometime overlap and at yet others diverge." "The interaction of standards, behaviour and the attitudes would be found interesting by social psychologists . . ." "It is hoped this study will provoke more social scientists to join in mining this rich vein of social scientific knowledge." In fact the reader learns nothing new from these hundred and twenty pages. Mr. A. Das, the contributor of a seminar paper, notes "The fault lies in his definition of inter-generational conflict" "In India at least the emergence of open Inter-generational Conflict between youthful urban and semi-urban educated group and its elders is quite clearly due to the structural weaknesses of the mechanics of conflict resolution and suppression of youthful revolts. Thus the Gungrade

method of sociometrics is hardly the right approach to it."

In the second part Professor Shah makes a valid point when he says "this is not a problem involving a clash of values . . . the contemporary youth revolt is not such a commitment but rather a total disownement of values." He adds "the disharmony between human attitudes is the most important feature of the contemporary conflict." All this comes as a statement without any argument or reasoning to support it. Says Prof. Rege "Inter-generational Conflicts are not possible in a traditionalist society." What is one to make of this statement? But accepting the description given of the word traditional, did not such a traditional society exist in the past? As has been recently remarked "the generational struggle in politics as a universal theme in human history, was naturally recorded by the earliest masters of political science, Plato and Aristotle." Must we then infer that the societies in which Plato and Aristotle lived were not traditional? Prof. A. Das's paper is marked by sound common sense. In his opinion for the emergence of the Inter-generational Conflict it is required that under challenge the elders should prove incapable of acting with sufficient firmness, and that the weakness of the state machinery for the maintenance of law and order should become evident. In conclusion he says "as is clear it is much more a case of social degeneration marked by abdocation of parental, academic and political authority of the elders." Mr. Roy Burman's paper contains some valuable data and the problem he raises is a very vital one. He says "The above figures bring out the fact that the burden of supporting society in all occupations is mainly borne by persons of the age group 15 to 34."

The seminar proceedings section makes many interesting points but gives the impression that either they were not discussed or the discussions on them were not reported. For instance "One of the participants questioned the assumption that there was such a conflict in India. He contended that the Inter-generational Conflict was being confused with the student unrest in our country." Now these statements cut at the very base of the arguments that are put forward in the seminar papers and so one would have expected a thorough rebuttal, but the report given in the book contains no such thing.

To sum up, it might not be uncharitable to describe this book as book-making for its own sake. Very little would have been lost had it not appeared. The Nachiketa Press however deserves praise for the very good printing and binding. The bibliography at the end though useful has some serious omissions.

THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE BE MICHAEL REISMAN

(Princeton University Press, $1.95)

D. M.

This paperback of 161 pages, including an appendix and an index, has on its front cover a reproduction of a picture in colour taken from Gemini XI. The book contains Professor Reisman's suggestions for

diplomatic alternatives in the Middle East.

Professor Reisman in a seven-page introduction declares that the Zionist cause was considerably strengthened by the systematic destruction of Jewry by the Nazis. The challenge to creative diplomacy is how to avoid the next war, which our present peacemakers are unknowingly programming. Professor Reisman expresses the fear that the feeling of insecurity may prompt the Israelis to go nuclear, and the Arabs to follow suit. He opines that four problems exist in the Middle East, viz. the relations between Israel and Egypt, between Israel and Syria, between Israel and Jordan and Israel and the Palestinian Arabs, each problem has its own history, involves political and moral factors, and should be solved individually ; if identified, a system of minimum order may be possible.

The author then refers to disunity among the Arab states, and fears that Egyptian promises are unreliable. Neither the U.S.A. nor the U.S.S.R. can profit by Arab internecine warfare. He suggests the formation of a Sinai Development Trust devoting to it fourteen pages of thought-provoking matter. This trust (S.D.T.) would be an international corporation with the capital provided by the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., states from the Middle East and others who would be persuaded to contribute. The chief object of this international trust would be the industrialization of the Sinai peninsula, after the completion of which peace and stability and a world order of human dignity would follow. A sentence at the end of a paragraph on page 38 contains praise for the Jan Sangh party in India.

Profesoor Reisman describes how the State of Israel was declared on 14 May 1948 after the departure of the British and the termination of the mandate. He seems convinced that the Palestinian Arabs desire the termination of the Israeli state, and that presently guerrilla warfare contributes largely to internal and interstate instability in the Middle East.

The reader then learns that Syria is the centre of commando training and is the most hated of Israel's enemies. The Druze claim descent from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. In 1948 they joined the Israelis in large numbers ; since then, they have enjoyed full citizenship and have served in the army. The author fears that the future demands of the Druze will generate tension not only in Israel but also in Syria and Lebanon. He is in favour of a Druze Trust Territory for the creation of which the initiative should emanate from Israel. In the first paragraph of the fifth chapter Professor Reisman reveals the shocking behaviour of the Jordanian government in Jerusalem, from which the Jews were excluded and several of their holy places desecrated in spite of Jordanian promises and international guarantees. He suggests for this holy city, an international regime with some form of integrated international control. In the last chapter the author holds that while minimum order may be policed, peace cannot be imposed, but must come from the inhabitants of the region. This cannot happen until the Arabs and Jews trust each other. Unfortunately the region lacks statesmen. There appears room for creative diplomacy. The appendix contains copies of documents, the

perusal of which will help the lay reader to appreciate the complications and difficulties prevailing in this part of our planet.

For the many people interested in developments in the Middle East, this handsome paper-back repays perusal. Whilst the learned professor's proposals to form international trusts do not appear immediately practical, in the absence of other methods of promoting peace in this hatred-ridden part of the world, these proposals are certainly worthy of careful, patient exploration.

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will gain and if the more stubborn among them choose to remain idle, the exchequer will gain.

Mr. Chavan's proposals to tax ready made clothes are fully in keeping with the aims of "social justice". As is well-known, at least in governmental circles, only a privileged few can afford these clothes. The ceiling on the salaries of Company executives should be welcomed by all right thinking people. But in these matters, GG would suggest a few more ceilings which will enhance the cause of socialism.

To start with, Mr. Chavan should put a limit on the size of the pockets one can have on these ready-made clothes. Because, ever since Mr. Chavan made his speech about eradicating the pockets of poverty in this country and allocated huge funds for this programme, there has been a mad rush for clothes with larger and bigger pockets. GG understands, this is due to a growing conviction among the people that the pockets of poverty will not go till the poverty in the pockets goes. Now, GG has no quarrel with this point of view but feels that these benefits should be subject to tax.

In the case of Company executives, the task is really difficult, because there is very little about them which remains to be taxed, but GG has a suggestion. He feels that a lower and an upper ceiling be imposed on the whiskers of the executives and the mini-skirts of their secretaries. Because, while the former are descending scandalously down, the latter are going alarmingly up, day by day. GG believes that these being the symptoms of capitalist decadence, should be taxed in a "socialist budget".

The tax on air travel is very appropriate and is highly consistent with the goals of a "just" society. If Mr. Tata feels that his jumbos will fly empty, GG has a simple solution to offer. Mr. Chavan should issue an Ordinance with immediate effect, making it compulsory for the Central and State ministers, their personal staff and the members of their family to fly in jumbos on their visits abroad. If this is done, GG is sure that Mr. Tata will be obliged to place a fresh order for three more jumbos within a few months.

Hence, as one can see, after Mr. Chavan's budget, prospects have become really bright for this country. What one needs now is to develop the proper socialist outlook and an unflinching faith in Mr. Gandhi. GG would end with the prayer Let there be many more budgets like this in the future, so that we may all be poor together.

THE RAIN

"He sendeth Rain on the just and the unjust."

* * * *

"The rain it raineth on the just
And also on the unjust fella:
But chiefly on the just, because
The unjust stealeth the just's umbrella."

* * * *

"There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods."

* * * *

"When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day."

* * * *

"How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
And in the narrow lane;
How beautiful is the rain!"

* * * *

"All the time that day in June
I shivered
A deep foreboding in my guts
Made my breast-tips quiver
(As though the long-weaned child
Thirsted again for a flow of milk)
And I felt exhausted by the long walk to the kitchen
(As though after running leagues)
Books bored me
And speech annoyed
And I wondered if perhaps I had caught something
Yet nothing happened
And I dreamt in the night of long travels
When I woke up the sky was heavy
And then it rained."

TRB 1224 EVEREST

GG LOOKS AT MR. CHAVAN'S BUDGET

GAURANG MEHTA

IF ever there was a real follower of Mrs. Gandhi, it is GG. And whatever Mr. Malhotra may claim, it is GG only who can rightly proclaim himself her 'old soldier'. Let her detractors say whatever they like, GG fervently holds that if ever poverty quits this country, it will quit under Mrs. Gandhi. Hence it was natural for him to wait with great expectation the Budget of Mrs. Gandhi's Finance Minister, which he was confident was going to be historic.

The budget has vindicated GG's confidence. It has proved to be historic in more than one way. It will be long remembered as a masterpiece. The beauty of the budget lies in the subtle touches of genius, which cannot be grasped by anyone who is not initiated into the complicated mechanics of the Socialist Budget. These touches are contained in the proposals which display a high degree of originality, innovation and insight. Those who choose to criticise Mr. Chavan's proposals, fail miserably to grasp the singular contribution made by the budget to the science of contemporary economics. Though with respect and humility GG would like to submit that it is only a beginning, a statement with which Mr. Chavan agreed, when he said that one budget could not bring about Socialism. One thing is sure, only budgets like this can usher in a genuine era of egalitarianism.

Talking of originality, GG would cite as an example, Mr. Chavan's brilliant invention which has come to be known as the Chavan "doctrine - De la Taxe de Luxe", in the new economic jargon. According to this doctrine, a commodity is first named as a luxury, then it is taxed as a luxury and after being so taxed, ipso facto it becomes a luxury. That Mr. Chavan had selected bread to be the first commodity in this category, is a happy fact. But as GG says it is only a beginning. He is thrilled at the very thought of the fantastic revenue possibilities this invention opens up. GG would suggest that water be selected as the next commodity. The task in this case would be easier, as there are many in this country who already find water to be a luxury.

If in taxing bread Mr. Chavan has displayed rare originality, by taxing cigarettes, he has shown amazing logical brilliance. GG cannot but admire his statement that whether a smoker chose to smoke or not to smoke, it would be a net gain to the national welfare. GG suggests that this logic be extended further and applied in the case of the 60,000 unemployed Engineers, who smoke the largest number of cigarettes, as they have nothing else to do. One thing these engineers possess in abundant quantity, is an innumerable number of idle hours. GG feels that these hours should be taxed in the national interest. From this measure will accrue twofold benefits. After the tax is imposed, if these engineers decide to do some jobs (for example shoeshining, taxi driving etc.) the nation

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